

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Hannah Pearson and I am honored to speak here today. I am a student at the UM

Pat Williams dedicated many years to improving Montana's education system before I had even enrolled at the University of Montana. Now students at UM and across the state are the beneficiaries of Pat's lifetime of experience, put to work every day as a member of the Board of Regents.

SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 3
DATE 3/20/13
BILL NO. SR33

Pat has spent his career fighting for a better education system and standing up for Montana students.

Pat believes our communities are made stronger and safer by talking about and solving problems — not shying away from them. Pat has made every decision by asking what is best for Montana students, Montana education and Montana taxpayers.

Because of this, I stand with Pat and I ask the Board of Regents to do the same. I initiated a petition to support Pat Williams' confirmation to the Montana Board of Regents. Overnight, my petition supporting Pat amassed more signatures than one opposing him managed to get in more than two weeks.

By any objective measure, Pat is qualified to serve on the Board of Regents. Pat chaired the Committee on Post secondary Education in the U.S. Congress, served as a Trustee or Director on countless national Boards and has irreplaceable experience to offer the Regents and the university system as they chart a course forward for Montana students.

Pat's critics have built their case around 16 words in a news story where Pat was answering questions specifically about a few wrongheaded players whose actions have negatively impacted the football team, the university and Missoula.

Pat wasn't talking about the athletic department, or even the entire football team.

Purposefully misinterpreting his comments is counterproductive to the critical process of healing our community's deep wounds.

My mother raised me to not be afraid to raise my voice against injustices in my community—even if it's unpopular to do so. I have fought against domestic violence and sexual assault since I was a kid. People like Pat inspire me to stay strong.

I believe we can build a Montana that assumes we can and must do better. Pat Williams will continue fighting for students, for better education in Montana, and for the people of Montana as he has his whole career. I, along with my peers, urge you to confirm him to the Board of Regents.

Aylinn Inmon is a Junior at the University of Montana, studying to get her bachelor's degree in social work. She is a native of Missoula.